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ABSTRACT

Working from the basic assumption that the primary motivation for those involved in school governance is self-interest, this paper develops and discusses 15 hypotheses that form the essential elements of an economic theory of school governance. The paper opens with a review of previous theories of governance and their origins in social science theory, then discusses the application of economic theory to social questions. The paper then develops its 15 specific hypotheses in six broad areas: (1) the motivation of school board candidates; (2) the campaign costs acceptable to candidates motivated by power or prestige; (3) the relative activity and interest levels of "power" candidates; (4) the reliance of board members on information providers outside the board, including the superintendent; (5) the relationships between board members' motivation and their interest in reducing conflict; and (6) the effects of voter distribution on conflict. (PGD)

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AN ECONOMIC THEORY OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

A Paper Presented at the

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EA 019 351

INTRODUCTION AND DEFINITIONS

Theories of School Governance

The study of school governance is concerned with the organization and control of public schools. Studies about school governance usually attend to the relationships between school administrators, school boards, and the public. These studies seek answers to questions such as: Who controls school policy and the operation of schools? How did those in control gain control? Is the governance of schools democratic? And, who benefits from decisions and policies related to schools?

The formal study of school governance is relatively new. It has only been since Charters (1955) chided researcher's obsession with survey research on school boards, that complex and probing questions about the governance of local school districts have been asked. Since that time three views have come to dominate the study of school governance -- the continuous competition theory, the decision output theory, and the dissatisfaction theory.

Theories are often thought of as being normative or positive. A normative theory presupposes desirable standards of behavior that are used as indicators for determining how closely observed behaviors approach desired behaviors. A positive theory seeks to explain behavior. Cause and effect relationships are hypothesized, and are used to predict behaviors and events.[1]

In the social sciences, theories usually have a degree of both normativeness and positiveness. This is true for the three theories

[1] Friedman (1953) presents a thorough discussion of positive theory in the social sciences in his introduction, "The Methodology of Positive Economics."

dominating the field of educational governance. These three theories vary in their positive aspect, both in their reliance on, and approach to explanations of behavior. The normative concern these three theories share is evaluating the democratic nature of school governance, i.e., how democratic is school governance? A discussion of the three theories of educational governance follows.

Continuous Competition Theory

The continuous competition theory is concerned with the level of citizen participation in school governance, and the amount of control citizens have over school governance. Advocates of the continuous competition theory establish the following norms (desired behaviors) as a test of the democratic nature of school governance: (1) competitive elections for school board membership, (2) a high level of citizen participation in school governance, and (3) control of the administration by the school board. Studies by continuous competition theorists find that school governance does not approach the norms they have set for it.[2]

Decision Output Theory

The decision output theory is concerned with the congruence between the delivery of public services and the desires of the public. The degree of public participation and the dominance of school boards by superintendents play a part in the theory, but the theory's emphasis is on the process of converting inputs into outputs. It is

[2] Zeigler & Jenings (1974) and Tucker and Zeigler (1980a) are major propents of continuous competition theory.

felt that if this conversion process is understood, outputs from the process can be predicted by analyzing demand inputs.[3]

Dissatisfaction Theory

The dissatisfaction theory is concerned with the relationships among major events in school governance. The theory's major contribution to the study of school governance is its power to predict. By examining data longitudinally, dissatisfaction theorists have pieced together a set of relationships that are useful in explaining and predicting events in school governance. They have found that a change in the socioeconomic makeup of a community can lead to a gap in values between the school board and the community, and that this gap in values often leads to the defeat of incumbent school board members (Kirkendall, 1966; Iannaccone & Lutz, 1970). The defeat of incumbent school board members, in turn, leads to involuntary superintendent turnover (Walden, 1966) and to a successor superintendent being selected from outside the school district (Freeborn, 1966).

Collective Choice and School Governance

The dissatisfaction theory of school governance, as set forth by Lutz and Iannoccone, reveals some relationships among major events in school governance. The development of a positive theory of school governance was a much needed step forward. However, the relationships that dissatisfaction theorists piece together need not

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[3] Studies supporting decision output theory include Tucker and Zeigler (1980b), Wirt and Kirst (1972), Carver (1968), and Kirst (1981). Decision output theory is based on David Easton's (1953) work in social science.

stand alone; they can be nestled in the theoretical framework referred to as collective choice.

Collective choice is recognized as a legitimate theoretical framework in political science. However, few studies of school governance have employed methods from collective choice. These studies focus on school governance at state and national levels.[4] Boyd (1978), lamenting the "chaotic and schizophrenic literature" in the study of educational policy and politics, sees a "...number of promising developments, especially in the work of those applying the concepts of [collective choice]." However, since Boyd's note of "promising developments," little work has been done that brings collective choice and educational governance together .

The theory developed here focuses on local school governance, and is based on collective choice theory. Specifically it relies on Anthony Downs' (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy. Downs' work is the basis for the spatial theories of political parties. It also sets forth a theory of rational voting.

Deductive Theory

As in most collective choice work, this theory is deductive; a set of assumptions is set forth and from it implications are logically developed. The theory is not a synthesis of known facts from which a set of hypothesis has been induced.[5] Readers should not search for citations of educational governance research; other than in the brief discussion of the educational governance literature, there are none.

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[4] These studies include Van Geel (1978), Michaelsen (1977), and West (1967).

[5] Laver (1981), in his introduction, provides a discussion of deductive and inductive theory astheyt apply to collective choice theory.

The theory's basic assumption is that the actors in school governance act in their self-interest. From this assumption the assumptions of political and economic rationality are developed. In a world of perfect information, the assumptions of self-interest and rationality alone, could lead to the logical development of a theory of school board decision-making. However, the lack of information, i.e., uncertainty, is a powerful force in decision-making. Understanding uncertainty and its effects on decision-making are central to the development of this theory.

The development of the theory begins, then, with a discussion of the assumptions of self-interest and rationality, and of the effects uncertainty has on decision-making. These assumptions and effects lead to the logical development of candidate motivation and of school board decision-making. This logical development leads to a set of testable hypothesis (presented at the end of this paper).

The value of a deductive theory is its power to predict. If a deductive theory fails to predict it must be discarded or its assumptions modified. This theory, then, is an initial step in a continuing process of hypothesis testing and assumption revising.

Specific Assumptions

Beyond the general assumptions of self-interest and rationality, there are assumptions specific to school governance that must be set forth. We assume the following (1) that school board members are elected in a democratic fashion as a result of periodic elections, (2) that a pool of potential candidates exists that will choose to run if favorable conditions present themselves, (3) that school boards consist of five members, serving staggered four year terms, (4) that as a body, a school board can make any decision within the realm of

the constitutional and the legal constraints of state and federal government, (5) that at school board meetings, decisions are made by a simple majority of the school board's membership, and (6) although prohibited from being identified on a ballot as affiliated with a particular political party, candidates for a school board position are free to campaign for office in any legal manner.

THINKING ECONOMICALLY

The Meaning of Rationality in the Theory

In order to accept an economic perspective of school governance, we must first accept the notion that school districts are institutions governed by real people. School board members and administrators have families, ties to their communities, needs for recognition, and material needs and wants. These people pursue their careers and office purposefully. The decisions they make -- whether to run for office, to apply for a better job, to vote yea or nea -- are done so rationally, i.e. in the most efficient manner.

In our theory, rationality is used in the economic sense, rather than the psychological or logical sense. People making rational decisions weigh their costs against their benefits. Costs include much more than money: Time, disruption of family life, electoral defeat, and other things can be costly. Benefits might include money, power, and prestige. Given a set of alternatives for a particular decision, and the cost and benefits of each alternative, rational people rank order their preferences among the alternatives, and choose the alternative that provides them the greatest net benefit.[6]

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[6] A good discussion of man as rational decision-maker is found in Laver (1981) chapter 1.

Our theory is concerned with political and economic rationality. In order to create a manageable theory, we arbitrarily divorce ourselves from looking at the whole personality. For example, it might be rational for a voter to vote for candidate A in order to please his wife, even though he might receive more political or economic benefit if candidate B were elected. To consider the myriad explanations of behavior, would blur our vision. Rather, we focus our lens so that a small, yet revealing part of the reasoning that directs peoples lives -- their political and economic costs and benefits -- can be scrutinized.

The Self-Interest Axiom

The crux of our theory is the assumption that people, though rational, are selfish. We assume that all actors in our theory act according to this view of human nature. In reality people are not always selfish. Politicians might vote their conscience, even though doing so will likely cost them votes. Such people of character are those we rightly admire. However, as with most economic theory, we shall rely on the self-interest axiom. As Adam Smith[7] said:

> Man has almost constant occasion for the help of his brethren, and it is in vain for him to expect it from their benevolence only....It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.

[7] This quote is found in Heilbroner (1986) who takes the quote from Adam Smith, The Wealth of Nations (New York: Modern Library, 1937), p. 643.

This self-interest axiom, then, is the cornerstone of our theory. The axiom will become clearer as we analyze its application to the decision-makers in our theory.

UNCERTAINTY AND INFORMATION COSTS

Uncertainty

"Uncertainty is any lack of sure knowledge about the course of past, present, or hypothetical events" (Downs, 1957:77). For decision-makers, the degree of uncertainty that exists can be expressed in the degree of confidence with which they can make a decision. Most uncertainty can be reduced by acquiring information.

Downs (1957:79) elaborates on the nature of uncertainty by drawing distinctions among reason, contextual knowledge, and information. Reason is the general ability we assume all people have -- to infer causal relationships and apply logical thought processes. Contextual knowledge is a cognizance of the relationships among the variables and forces that exist in a particular field such as mathematics, sociology, a nations monetary system, and so forth. Information is the possession of data that relate to a particular field. The value of π is a datum related to mathematics. The closing price of a share of IBM stock is a datum related to the stock market. Information has little meaning without the contextual knowledge peculiar to a particular field of study.

Uncertainty due to a lack of information is relatively easy to reduce. Bits of information can be provided as needed. Reducing uncertainty caused by a lack of contextual knowledge is a much more difficult task; a major educational effort is required.

Uncertainty is a critical factor in the study of school governance. The level of uncertainty influences the decisions of school board members, potential candidates, and voters. School board members might be uncertain about the opinions of voters regarding a particular policy or uncertain about the effects a particular action might have on the school district. Voters might be uncertain about actions the school board has taken, or uncertain about the benefits they receive from schools. In these examples, information that increases the level of confidence board members or voters have in their decision-making might have a powerful effect on their decisions.

The Process of Becoming Informed

A thorough analysis of information gathering and processing, and a study of effects these activities have on decision-making is beyond this theory's scope. It is important, however, in the development of our theory to note some characteristics and effects of information costs.

In terms of time and money, gathering and analyzing information can be costly. Therefore, decision-makers exercise economy when attempting to reduce uncertainty. There is a vast amount of information available. Decision-makers must determine which information is helpful to them. The process of winnowing available information in order to gather desired information produces an inherent bias in all reported information. There are many sources of reported information available to decision-makers. Each source has its own particular bias. In order to economize in gathering and analyzing information, decision-makers must determine which sources have a bias similar to their world view.

Decision-makers determine how much information to gather by using the basic marginal cost-return principle of economics. As each increment of information becomes available, a determination must be made regarding the cost needed to acquire and analyze that increment, and the benefit that increment is expected to have on the decision-makers' level of confidence that a good decision will be made.

The initial datum of information gathered is likely the least costly, and the last gathered the most costly. As information is gathered, confidence in decision-making increases, effectively decreasing the benefit of the next datum of information. As information gathering and analysis proceeds, the increasing cost of information and the decreasing benefit of each additional datum of information quickly lead to a point of diminishing returns. (See Figure 1.)

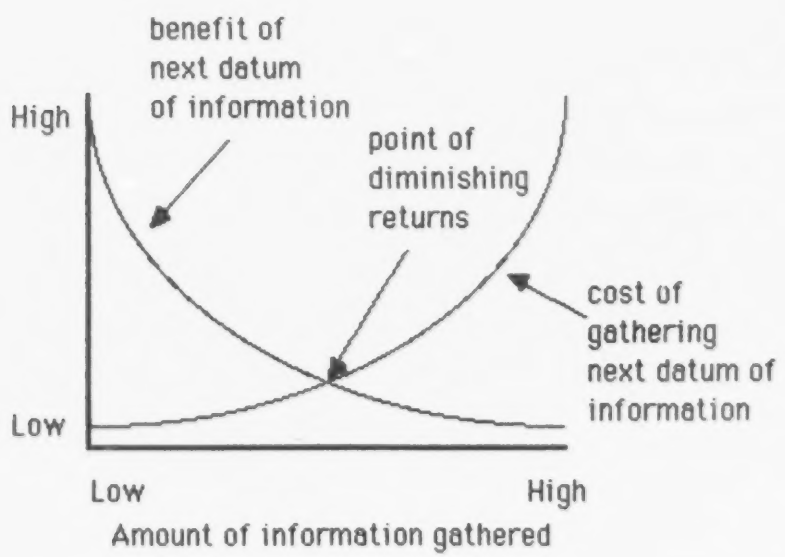

Figure 1. Relationship between cost of gathering information and benefits of gathering information as additional information is gathered.

How Rational Citizens Reduce Information Costs

Citizens can reduce their information costs by utilizing the stream of free information society provides. Sources of free information include mass media, government agencies, special interest groups, and fellow citizens with special interests. These people and groups have a contextual knowledge that allows them to efficiently gather and analyze information in specialized fields. Citizens, by a process of trial and error, come to rely on a particular set of sources of information. These sources of information have bias that agree with the citizens' world view. Citizens may receive free information from other sources, but they will discount this information because its bias is incongruent with theirs.

THE ROLE OF CANDIDATES IN THE THEORY

The Motivation of Candidate Action

We assume that candidates in our theory act soley to obtain the income, the prestige, and the power that holding office affords. Based on these assumptions rests the fundamental hypothesis of our theory: candidates for the school board campaign and conduct themselves in office in a manner that they expect will maximize their personal benefits.[8]

In light of this hypothesis, the question arises as to how the social function of school boards, i.e., providing education for children, can be accomplished if board candidates are motivated by personal gain? We recall from our discussion of the self-interest axiom, that

[8] Downs' (1957:28) fundamental hypothesis is that "Parties formulate policies in order to win elections, rather than win elections to formulate policies."

most social good is provided as a result of peoples' private motives. As Downs (1957:29) states, "Thus social functions are usually the by-products, and private ambitions the ends, of human action." We suspect that this holds true for school governance.

Candidates in our theory are motivated by a desire for the benefits of office, including income, power, and prestige. Although these benefits might be slight, we assume that the cost of obtaining office is also often slight. For only if potential candidates' calculuses indicate that the benefits of candidacy outweigh the costs, will they enter the race.

The Candidate's Calculus

Benefits and Costs of School Board Membership

Compared to many other political offices, the benefits of school board membership are usually slight . The benefits of political office typically mentioned are prestige, power, and income (Downs, 1957:30). In our theory we assume that there is no direct income (salary or wage) and little material advantage to be gained from school board membership. (However, perks, such as attendance at conventions, are likely benefits for some school board candidates.)

The degree of power available to board members is also low when compared to many other political offices: This power can be used only to influence school related decisions; it is usually greatly restricted by state and federal regulation; and it is shared by five board members.

We assume there is a certain amount of prestige to be gained by school board membership. This of course varies from community to community. Intertwined with prestige is the notion of civic duty.

Some people might feel a need to be involved in their community's activities. School Board membership might benefit these people by providing an opportunity to "pay back" their community.

The cost of school board membership includes time spent on school board meetings and other duties, loss of friends and business clients due to community conflict, and criticism from the public.

When considering costs of school board membership we need also consider the cost of candidacy. There might be monetary costs for such things as newspaper ads, mailings, and filing fees; time spent filing and campaigning can also be costly; and losing an election might include the cost of humiliation.

Becoming a Candidate

In deciding to run for school board membership, potential candidates sum their perceived benefits and their perceived costs, then find the difference between the two sums. If benefits minus costs is positive, they become candidates. If the difference is zero or negative, they remain observers.

A major difference in our economic theory of school governance and Downs' economic theory of democracy is the consideration of the variability of benefits and costs associated with holding office. Downs' analysis is void of a calculus for determining whether candidates' (or in Downs' case, political parties) will run for office; he implicitly assumes that the benefits of holding office are always greater than the costs. For most state and national offices perhaps this is true, and a calculus of candidacy is unnecessary. However, the minimal benefits afforded by school board membership exaggerate the costs of running for, and holding office. Thus the calculus of

potential candidates is an important factor in understanding school governance.

Potential candidates' calculuses have considerable implications for school governance. Slight changes in the political or the institutional environment might affect these calculuses. Community conflict and its resulting strain on personal relationships within a community will prove too costly for some candidates seeking the prestige of school board membership,[9] while providing an issue that makes the power of school board membership appealing to others. Therefore, as conflict increases power candidates appear and prestige candidates disappear. (See Figure 2.)

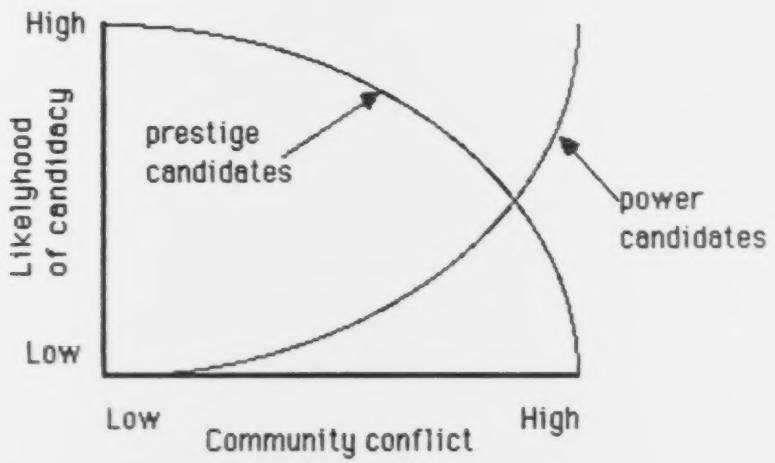

Figure 2. Effect of community conflict on power and prestige candidates.

[9] Coleman (1957) provides a discussion of the effect community conflict has on personal relationships, and in turn, the effect this has on individual participation in the conflict.

Campaigning: Power and Prestige

The benefits school board candidates seek, influence their performance in office. Candidates who seek office in order to gain power behave differently than candidates who seek office in order to gain prestige. It seems useful, then, to identify candidates according to the primary benefit they seek from school board membership. Therefore, in discussions of campaigning and decision-making we refer to power candidates and prestige candidates.

If benefits of school board membership are slight (as we assume they usually are) candidates will avoid costs associated with providing information to voters. In this case, issues, if they exist, will often be invisible to voters. However, as candidates' potential net benefits of school board membership increase, they will be more likely to formulate policy in order to campaign for votes. The costs of formulating and disseminating policy include (1) the cost of reducing uncertainty in order to reveal the policy likely to gain the most votes, and (2) the cost of providing information to voters in order for them to understand the policy being advocated.

One candidate advocating policy in order to gain votes, could encourage other candidates to advocate contrary policy. The process of candidates countering each others policies might lead to overt conflict. We assume that if voters perceive conflict among candidates, the prestige available to candidates is reduced. Therefore, the only candidates likely to campaign with policy are those seeking the benefits of power afforded by holding office.

The interests of power candidates is likely quite narrow; they want to influence a particular aspect of school district policy. However, if necessary for developing a winning strategy, the policy they espouse will have a greater scope than their immediate

interests. Prestige candidates avoid conflict. If they campaign at all, they restrict their campaign to name recognition and reputation promotion strategies. Also, if an election is expected to be contested, potential prestige candidates hesitate to declare their candidacy . The possible conflict during a campaign and the possibility of losing the election are unbearable costs for most prestige candidates.

Candidates incur campaign costs only as long as the marginal benefit of the last vote gained is greater than the cost of acquiring that vote. Campaign costs, however, are not born solely by candidates. Individuals and interest groups who might benefit from a particular candidate's membership on the school board might provide resources that lower the candidate's costs. Power candidates will likely attract and seek out such support.

THE BASIC LOGIC OF SCHOOL BOARD DECISION-MAKING

School Board Member Dependency on the Superintendent

Seeking and analyzing information related to school board matters can be costly activities. Board members, however, can reduce these costs by relying on their superintendent to provide and analyze information for them. As mentioned earlier, the benefits of school board membership are slight. When determining whether or not to run for office, for most board members prestige is the benefit most likely to enter their calculus . Assuming prestige affords limited benefits, for most board members the cost of running for and holding office must be low. If not, the balance in their calculus

shifts to noncandidacy. Therefore, prestige candidates avoid gathering and analyzing information.

In certain situations power board members bear the costs of gathering and analyzing information. Power board members often benefit by taking a stand independent of other board members and the superintendent. By using power to influence policy, these members gain benefits by keeping campaign promises, which for them is a vote maximizing strategy. The power of school board membership is dependendant on a board member's ability to gather and analyze information. If power board members are dependent on their superintendent for information, they will receive biased reporting that is unlikely to meet their needs. Therefore, to some extent, power board members will pay the cost of gathering and analyzing information.

Besides the benefits of taking a stand independent of other board members and the superintendent, dependency on superintendents for information is also related to the amount and complexity of the information needed for policy formation. As the amount and complexity of information needed for policy formation increases the degree of uncertainty increases. The increase in uncertainty increases the cost of gathering information, which in turn increases board members' dependency on superintendents to provide them information. Put a bit more directly, board members' dependency on the superintendent for information increases as the amount and complexity of information needed for policy formation increases.

The degree of dependency on the superintendent for information gathering and analysis, then, is a function of the interaction between the benefits of taking an independent position from other board

members, and the cost of information gathering and analysis. (See Table 1.)

Table 1. School board member dependency on superintendent as interaction between cost of gathering information and benefits of taking action independent of other school board members

Benefits of taking independent action	Cost of gathering information: Low	Cost of gathering information: High
Low	moderate dependency	high dependency
High	low dependency	moderate dependency

Effects of Campaigning

If power candidates are elected, we assume they are obligated to keep their campaign promises to voters (or at least appear to try to keep them). The obligation to keep campaign promises leads to a division on the school board between power members and prestige members, or between power members who have contrary promises to keep. These divisions likely appear as an increase in split voting by the school board.

In order to retain their benefits of office, prestige board members attempt to reduce conflict that can lead to community dissatisfaction with the school board. If conflict exists between a

newly elected power board member and prestige board members, prestige board members can reduce conflict by convincing power board members to accept existing policy. Also, prestige members can shift their policy toward that espoused by the power member(s). With either strategy, a gradual accommodation between power and prestige members is expected. (However, changes in key school board membership via resignation, retirement, or incumbent defeat expedites accommodation.) The dynamics of the accommodation process is evidenced by coalitions of board members seeking policy change. Because of school board members' depedency on their supertintendent, the most dramatic policy change would be the involuntary turnover (firing or resignation under pressure) of the superintendent.

The accomodation process might reveal power board members who appeared to be prestige board members. That is, these mock-prestige members might have gained board membership with minimal campaigning, and worked amiably with other board members, while covertly influencing their pet policy area. When faced with opposition from new power board members, the behavior of these mock-prestige board members shifts to behavior characteristic of power board members.

Fundamental Principals of School Board Decision-Making

The Concept of Marginal Operations

Since in our theory, school board members want to be reelected (or at least maintain prestige which is dependent on avoidance of community dissatisfaction), they carry out those policies and

appropriate those funds which derive them the most votes, and use those methods of financing and carry out those decisions which lose them the least votes. Actions taken by school board members are scrutinized by potential candidates for school board membership. These potential candidates realize that citizens (even though their utility gain from school board decisions might be greater than than their loss from taxes and from school board acts they dislike) might disapprove strongly of some marginal activity of the school board.

Thus, voters, school board members, and potential school board members are all concerned with marginal alterations in school board activity. Any partial change in school board behavior patterns can lead to dissatisfaction of voters, and challenges to incumbent school board members.

The Majority Principle

The multitude of choices available to a school board can be staggering. There are many areas in which policy can be made or altered, and many ways this can be done. To simplify our analysis we make six simplifying assumptions:

1. All decisions are made by board members who can look at all margins of possible action.

2. At each margin, there are only two alternatives of action, M and N.

3. All school board member choices are independent of each other; i.e., the outcome of each decision has no bearing on the possible choices or outcomes of any other decision.

4. There are only two people competing for office, one of whom is now in office.

5. Potential candidates (incumbents and challengers) know the utility function of individual voters, so they can tell whether and by how much each voter prefers M or N for every choice it is considering. By this we assume interpersonal cardinality of utility, but we say nothing about interpersonal comparisons.

6. Voters are informed without cost of all possible school board decisions and their consequences, an they make voting decisions rationally as described earlier.[10]

Under these oversimplified assumptions, the incumbent board members make their decisions by taking an informal poll of voters. They always choose the policy decision favored by the majority. To do otherwise would invite defeat, since challengers could align with incumbents on all policy issues except issue x, on which the incumbent ignored the majority. Since voters are indifferent on all issues except x, the election would come down to issue x, and the challengers, since they support the majority opinion, would gain the most votes and win the election. Thus, in order to win reelection, incumbents must support the majority on every issue.

Opposition Strategies Against the Majority Principle

Under conditions of certainty, incumbents, adopt the positions favored by a majority of voters. If incumbents fail to adopt policies favored by the majority, challengers can adopt the majority position and win the election.

Under particular conditions, challengers can, however, mount a successful campaigns by forming coalitions of minorities.[11] Since several issues can enter a campaign, there might exist minorities on

[10] These assumptions are adapted from Downs (1957:54).
[11] Downs (1957:55-62) offers a more complete discussion of opposition strategies against the majority priciple.

several issues who feel strongly about their minority position and less strongly about a majority position they favor. Even though in all cases the incumbents voted with the majority opinion, a coalition of voters of strongly held minority views across several issues can defeat them. Also, for some issues a clear majority might be absent. In these cases, positions adopted by incumbents can result in minority strategies by challengers.

The Effect of Voter Distribution

We will assume that regarding a particular issue, voters can be distributed on a continuum ranging from 0 on the left to 100 on the right. For example, regarding a proposal to spend more money on education, voters likely have varying opinions. On the left of the continuum we could place those voters who feel strongly that no additional money should be spent, on the right those who feel strongly that much more money should be spent, and place in the middle of the continuum those who wish to increase spending by a moderate amount.

If candidate A is currently leaning toward a position at 25 on the continuum and candidate B is leaning toward a position at 75, and if along the continuum voters are distributed normally, in order to capture more votes, both candidates move closer to the midpoint (50). Movement by either candidate, however, is contingent upon information they have regarding the position of the voters along the continuum.

For most school districts across most issues, the assumption of a normal distribution of voters might be reasonable . However, on certain issues some school districts might have a distribution of voters at each extreme of a continuum. A distribution of voters at the extremes will cause candidates A and B to move away from the

center of the continuum. They will instead move toward the center of the distribution of voters at each extreme. (If most districts have a normal distribution of voters across most issues, and they likely do, we would expect school boards to consist predominately of prestige board members.)

Candidates will move in a direction that will capture the most votes. In an extremists distribution, a position at the center of the continuum will capture the fewest votes. This type of distribution leads to an increase in benefits available to some school board members because the power of office has potentially greater benefits when the anticipated policy decisions can shift from one extreme to another.

The distribution of voters on an issue can change. Voters might adjust their position on an issue to accommodate newly acquired information. This, we expect, would ordinarily be a rather slow process and one in which voters in a normal distribution would adjust to in similar degrees. A shift in voters' positions might occur, but the normal distribution likely remains. If, however, a school district aquires a new group of voters, the distribution of voters could change dramatically.

New industry might bring about an increase in population (and therefore an increase in voters) that has a much different world view than the established population. This difference in world views might be revealed at the polls by the new group of voters taking positions different from those of established voters.

If the distribution of voters changes greatly, candidates must shift their policies in order to capture enough of the new votes to win election. Failure to shift policies to accommodate the newly franchised voters might result in defeat of incumbent board members.

Downs (1957:129) notes that "Whenever such a radical change in the distribution of voters occurs, existent [candidates] will probably be unable to adjust rapidly because they are ideologically immobile." A radical change in the distribution of voters, then, gives an advantage to challengers. Without previous public commitments, challengers can adjust their policies in order to capture enough of the combination of newly franchised voters and established voters to win the election. If incumbents are sensitive to potential conflict that power candidates can generate, they will retire from office rather than suffer a loss of prestige that comes with community conflict and electoral defeat.

DERIVATIVE IMPLICATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses below are derived from the basic assumption that for the actors in school governance the primary motivation is self-interest. They are presented in the order in which they are discussed in the paper. The section from the paper supporting each hypothesis is cited.

Hypothesis 1: School board membership is held predominantly by people seeking the prestige the office affords. (The Motivation of Candidate Action and The Effect of Voter Distribution)

Hypothesis 2: Prestige candidates seek to reduce conflict. (Campaigning: Power and Prestige)

Hypothesis 3: Prestige candidates seek office only when costs of campaigning and holding office are low. (Campaigning: Power and Prestige)

Hypothesis 4: Power candidates are willing to incur greater costs of gaining and holding office. (Campaigning: Power and Prestige)

Hypothesis 5: Power candidates attract and seek out resources to support their candidacy. (Campaigning: Power and Prestige)

Hypothesis 6: The range of policy issues raised by power candidates during a campaign is greater than the range of issues about which they are concerned. (Campaigning: Power and Prestige)

Hypothesis 7: Prestige board members depend on the superintendent for gathering and analyzing information. (School Board Member Dependency on the Superintendent)

Hypothesis 8: Power board members are willing to bear some of the cost of gathering and analyzing information. (School Board Member Dependency on the Superintendent)

Hypothesis 9: Board member dependency on the superintendent for information increases as the amount and complexity of information needed for policy formation increases. (School Board Member Dependency on the Superintendent)

Hypothesis 10: Upon election, power candidates create a division within the school board. This division is revealed by an increase in nonunanimous voting by the school board. (Effects of Campaigning)

Hypothesis 11: In order to reduce conflict, prestige board members seek accommodation with power board members via socialization of the power member or via shifting their policies toward that of the power member(s). (School Board Member Dependency on the Superintendent)

Hypothesis 12: Board members seek to support positions favored by a majority of voters. (The Majority Principle)

Hypothesis 13: When a normal distribution of voters exist around a particular issue, conflict will be minimal. (The Effect of Voter Distribution)

Hypothesis 14: When voters are distributed at the extremes of an issue, conflict will arise and power candidates representing each extreme will appear . (The Effect of Voter Distribution)

Hypothesis 15: When voter distributions change, incumbent board members remain ideologically intransigent, inviting power candidates to challenge existing policy by running for office. (The Effect of Voter Distribution)

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